

**ETHOS ACADEMY TRUST
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday 4th April 2019 at 5.00pm

Present:	Graham Dewhirst (GD)	Trustee
	Andrew Rawson (AR)	Trustee
	Jo Firth (JF)	Trustee
	Lorraine Absolon (LA)	Trustee
	Marcus Newby (MN)	Trustee
	Charles Haygarth (CH)	Trustee
In Attendance:	Jayne Foster	CEO
	Tracy Jackson	CFO
	Martin Ridge	Headteacher (Reach Academy)
	Rebecca Smith	Headteacher (Ethos College)
	Jane Viney	Clerk to the Board

Item	Action
<p>1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence: In the absence of the Chair, LA agreed to act as chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from Victoria del Giudice (Chair), Jane Acklam and Rob Whitehouse.</p>	
<p>2 Minutes of Previous Meeting 7th February 2019: The minutes were unanimously agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Acting Chair.</p>	
<p>3 Welcome to Ethos College The Head Teacher had prepared a slide presentation with photographs to show to Trustees. <u>Background:</u> Ethos College is a KS4 Pupil Referral Unit supporting pupils with SEMH needs. There is also a KS1 – 4 Medical Provision and support for KS4 pupils with complex and/or exceptional needs. The school provides a secure and stimulating learning environment based on nurture principles and a holistic, child centred approach. The pupils have a ‘fresh start’ every day and receive enjoyable, personalised learning. The aspiration for all pupils is that they will become confident, happy, caring individuals who make a positive contribution to society. Staff in the school are skilled at working with SEMH needs and they work in partnership with parents, pupils and other professionals. They accurately identify the needs of individual pupils and personalise the curriculum accordingly. <u>The Daily Routine:</u> There are five groups in school. The day starts with breakfast (provided free of charge) where pupils sit around a dining table with staff in a ‘family’ environment. Pupils have a rota for washing up duties. Following breakfast the morning session focuses on the core curriculum: English, Maths and Science. Pupils are challenged by the curriculum which is both nurturing and academic. There is a reading culture within the school and literacy is a whole school focus. In nurture groups the pupils have time to read each morning and on Tuesday there is a whole school ‘drop everything and read’ time.</p>	

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Break Time – this is very structured and includes lots of activities including playstation, pool, health and beauty, healthy eating. There is also access to the outdoor space and skipping has proved popular and football will also be offered as an outdoor activity.

Options/Alternative Curriculum – this includes Cooking, Duke of Edinburgh, Arts, Crafts, PE, Geography, Music, Hair and Beauty. The school offers 9 different level 1 and 2 qualifications to be completed in 1 year to ensure all pupils can leave with as many suitable qualifications (including GCSEs) as possible. The curriculum is very broad and based on pupil needs.

SMSC and British Values are embedded in everything at Ethos College.

Parental Involvement:

This can be difficult as previous bad experiences with schools creates an initial barrier. However, the school makes a phone call home every day to parents with feedback on how the pupil has done. In addition the school holds regular parents evenings and showcase events throughout the year to find positive ways of engaging parents / carers in their children’s education.

Successes:

The HT outlined a case study of a Year 10 pupil with complex needs including sensory needs, Autism, ADHD and anxiety and depression. The pupil was previously in a mainstream school accessing just 2 hours a day on a reduced timetable. Then a referral was made to Ethos where interventions were put in place to support the pupil and an EHCP was obtained. The school provided wrap around nurture and a supportive curriculum. The pupil has achieved 98% attendance on a full time timetable to date this academic year and passed an entry level qualification whilst in Year 10. The pupil now enjoys school and is making friends.

Trustees thanked the Headteacher for the informative report.

Trustees asked if joining the MAT had made a difference. The HT reported that it had: there was more accountability, a more professional approach and it was good to work with the other settings and share good practice.

The CEO asked Trustees to make suggestions on the content of future presentations.

Trustees asked that a case study from each setting be presented at the next round of All meetings.

Trustees to send suggestions for future topics for presentation to the CEO.

Strategy and Planning

4 Budget Planning for 2019/20

This had been discussed at the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The next step is a discussion with the LA Senior Finance Officer re: Top Up Funding. £10k is available from the ESFA but the LA need to contribute funds also and this will be addressed at the meeting.

The budget has been drafted for the next 3 years and needs to be submitted to the ESFA.

The Year End forecast must be submitted by 31st May 2019 and the 3 year budget by 31st July 2019 – so this will be discussed at the Trustee meeting in early July.

The Management Accounts and the 3 year forecast are all on the secure Trustee area of the website for Trustees to look at.

5 Business Plan / Staffing Structure update

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	<p>Trustees approved the plan to expand the central team at the last meeting. The advert for an HR Advisor is live now. 2 Trustees are required for the interview panel once a date is set. The Chief Operations/Compliance Officer role will be advertised shortly once the recruitment pack is completed.</p> <p>Rebecca Smith was appointed as Acting Head of Ethos College with effect from 01/04/2019 and Jayne Foster took on the full time CEO role from the same date.</p> <p>Trustees asked when the new appointments for COO and HR are likely to commence employment. The CEO reported that this will be during the summer so that they are 'up and running' by September.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Safeguarding Skills Audit Outcomes and Next Steps</p> <p>The recent safeguarding skills audit had shown that generally Trustees are reasonably confident with Safeguarding as a topic but less happy with the specifics. Safeguarding training across the MAT is being considered. Discussions are ongoing about what the specific needs are and whether face to face or online training is more appropriate. A programme of training for the year will be drafted and shared with Trustees. Trustees will be directed to online training and how they can access this (possibly via The Key as this tracks who does what and feeds into the SCR). Further information will be given later.</p> <p>Trustees asked how they could have confidence that safeguarding matters were being handled correctly. It was explained that the Link Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding makes regular visits and checks details, documents, processes and procedures. Safeguarding is an agenda item at every Trustee meeting and Curriculum Committee. The Safeguarding Link Trustee and the Curriculum Committee gives regular reports to Trustees. Also Safeguarding is a HT responsibility so if there were any issues the HT would contact the Chair of Trustees and the Safeguarding Link Trustee. The Kirklees SCB has an online audit tool which all 3 schools have completed which would indicate if there were inadequacies in the systems and procedures. Two of the three schools have also had an independent safeguarding audit and the reports from these are included in the documents circulated to Trustees (the third to be undertaken on 29/04/19). This audit examines individual cases not just procedures.</p> <p>Trustees questioned whether the Trust had considered using CPOMS rather than Schoolpod for recording safeguarding issues. CPOMS builds a case study and timeline and is a very robust and secure system. The CEO will liaise with Heads and DSLs to consider both systems side by side.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Governor suggested that tracking through a case study may help Trustees to understand more how the process is managed. This will be a future agenda item.</p>	<p>LA/ Clerk</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>CEO Report (circulated prior to the meeting)</p> <p>The CEO highlighted the following points:</p> <p>1.1 Exceptional Needs</p> <p>There is significant demand for this provision but no formal means of funding it – currently it is on an ad-hoc basis which means the provision is dependent on using supply staff as and when necessary. The Trust would like to take this provision in house and employ its own team to run the provision. An additional paper has been circulated outlining the details of the proposal (appendix 7.3). LA and RW have worked alongside the Executive Leadership</p>	

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Team on this proposal. This will provide financial stability, staffing continuity, resulting in improved outcomes for pupils. Trustees were asked to approve the proposal to meet with senior colleagues from the LA to formalise this arrangement.

Trustees asked how the LA would be able to sign off funding for an SLA with an unknown number of pupils accessing the provision. The CEO reported that it would be possible to look at numbers over the past year and reach an agreement that any over funding could be used in other areas, such as for more outreach work. It would operate like the Medical needs provision. If more pupils used the provision than was funded there would be additional funding provided from the LA. Demand for the provision is not dropping, rather it is increasing for the foreseeable future.

After discussion Trustees unanimously approved the proposal.

1.4 KPIs

Included within the CEO report is an A3 sheet of KPIs which has been discussed at committees but not by Trustees. Trustees were asked to review the document and ensure it meets the needs of the Trust.

Trustees asked what were the main lines of interest to focus on? The CEO reported that attendance is an important one. The value added line shows how much better pupils do within Ethos Academy Trust than in mainstream school. Obviously for pupils with medical needs there is impact on their attendance.

Trustees asked if the document could be RAG rated to highlight which areas needed to be a focus. It was pointed out that as there is no benchmarking data available this would be difficult.

Trustees asked that Leaders inform them of the headlines each time KPIs are discussed, perhaps focussing on a different KPI each time and having a commentary on it. Trustees further requested that where there are targets attached to the KPI can they be shown on the document so it is possible to cross reference progress/improvement towards targets.

In summary the document should be presented with a focus on 1 section and should be accompanied by a dialogue and context of what is good and what is not. CEO

1.6 Working with Engaging Education

The Trust is working with Engaging Education to raise the positive profile and to counteract national adverse media coverage around PRUs. It is working to establish social media platforms for the Trust including twitter and facebook and to generally improve the Trust's online profile. They have also produced the video (viewed earlier during the Ethos College presentation).

Trustees asked if this work is to attract other schools to join the trust. The CEO replied that is part of the aim but it could also help attract increasing numbers of pupils, it celebrates the success of the PRU provision and is helpful in attracting potential staff.

2.2.2 CFO Role

The contract for the current CFO runs out on 31/08/2019 and there are 3 options proposed:

- 1) Extend the current temporary contract to 31/12/2019;
- 2) Convert the contract to a permanent contract;
- 3) Go out to external recruitment for the role.

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Trustees asked if 0.6FTE is enough to fulfil the role? The CEO reported that with the other appointments already approved (HR Advisor and COO) this is anticipated to be sufficient. The CEO recommends the second option.

Trustees suggested it would be more prudent to wait until the COO and HR appointments are in place to decide whether 0.6FTE for the CFO is sufficient. Trustees were concerned that there is a risk associated with option 2. If the Trust grows will 0.6FTE be enough?

The CFO indicated a willingness to work up to 0.8FTE if this became necessary. The CEO stated that the trust needs financial stability and a permanent appointment would ensure this.

Trustees were concerned that although the LA had not been successful in its bid for a Free School, if another opportunity presents itself 0.6FTE CFO might not be enough. It was suggested that if another opportunity arose in the near future it would be possible to 'buy in' external support. The appointment of an HR Advisor and a COO would also give additional capacity to the CFO role as currently all three roles are being handled by CFO and CEO.

After much discussion the Trustees recommended Option 1 – to extend the temporary contract which would allow time for the new structure to embed and give more clarity around the needs of the role. Trustees are aware of the need for stability and continuity and therefore recommended that CFO contract be extended until 31/03/2020. This was

CEO

unanimously approved. Trustees were reminded that there is a strategy session being held on 7th May 2019 at Reach Academy.

Trustees thanked the CEO for the informative report.

8 Committee Reports and Priorities

Pay and Performance: As 2 members of the committee are not present an update will be given at the next meeting.

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

The committee had looked at the KPIs, mainly the financial ones, but had looked at some non-financial ones. The committee had also discussed Health and Safety 'serious incidents' and requested drill down information to identify trends.

The Management Accounts were showing a surplus for the current year and the CFO had been asked to look at the reserves policy to ensure it meets the needs of the trust.

The 3 year forecast indicates a deficit budget for year 3. The Auditors had reassured the committee that this is not unusual for year 3. There had been an agreed action to look at future funding from the LA.

The committee had also discussed a Capital Plan to invest in Reach and had requested a business plan with more details be provided.

The committee had also discussed the internal audit report and were satisfied that actions were being taken in response to the report. There will be a further audit visit in June.

The risk strategy and risk register were reviewed and feedback on impact measures was requested.

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	<p>The committee approved the Terms of Reference and several policies. The Finance Policy needs a slight amendment and JF is to work with the CFO on improving the Health and Safety policy.</p> <p>Trustees asked about the costs of the internal and external audit service as this had been agreed as a sum of £15k – has this changed? The CFO reported that the overall cost is £15k but in addition there is an additional cost of £3k per visit. It is planned to separate internal and external audit next year as there are cheaper providers for the internal audit service.</p> <p><u>Standards Committee</u></p> <p>The committee had approved the revised terms of reference and discussed the Safeguarding Audits for Engage Academy and Ethos College – these were excellent reports. There were also good comments on safeguarding from the LA Safeguarding Children Board audit recently undertaken. Both of the above audits will feed into the action plan for each school.</p> <p>The committee had discussed the ongoing problem of PP funding. If a pupil is not on roll at census date, the school does not received the PP funding. The committee also discussed using PP funding for positive interventions.</p> <p>There was nothing to report on vulnerable learners this time. A definition of ‘vulnerable’ is pending.</p> <p>The committee discussed the curriculum and what is needed at each setting. Engage and Reach are both reviewing their curriculum currently. Progress of pupils within the Trust settings is not always academic, but can be SEMH and resilience related etc. Some of these aspects are more qualitatively measured and therefore not as easily quantified.</p>	
Governance and Compliance		
9	<p>Board Membership Update</p> <p>The board still needs a volunteer to be Vice Chair but this will be deferred to the next meeting when the Chair is present.</p>	
10	<p>Statutory Documents and Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Terms of Reference Update – this included a reference to approve policies and decisions via email. The committee terms of reference had been updated to reflect this also and approved by committees. Trustees unanimously approve the updated Terms of Reference. ● Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs and Conditions Policy Previously the schools had used the LA standard policy but the document presented is an amalgamation of the LA policy and some other recommended school’s policies, which fit the Trust’s needs. Trustees unanimously approved the policy. ● Procedure for Dealing with an Allegation against Staff. An external HR advisor had supported with this policy. The majority of the information is taken directly from the KCSIE 2018 document including the flowchart of actions. Trustees unanimously approved the policy. Trustees asked that the CEO check which policy included the procedure for a staff v staff allegation. 	CEO

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11	<p>Risk Register Update and discussion</p> <p>A working party from the FAR committee have developed a strategy document for how to identify risks and how to include them in the register. The committee have been asked for feedback on the document including the impact statements. Do trustees want to discuss this at a Board meeting? Trustees requested the FAR committee continue to discuss and refine this and report back to Trustees as appropriate.</p>	
12	<p>Matters Arising/Actions Update from Minutes of Meeting 07/02/2019</p> <p>Action Points were discussed and updated with most now being closed. There were no other matters arising.</p>	
13	<p>Any Other Urgent Business</p> <p>The CEO reported that the Trust would like to change the pay date for support staff (as outlined in TUPE measures pre-conversion). Currently they are paid 13 times per year (4 weekly) and the proposal is to bring it in line with the teaching staff pay date and move the 12 monthly payments. The LA had proposed this but have had to delay due to problems with their consultation raised by the Unions. The proposal is to implement this from June 2019. Trustees asked if the Trust has consulted with the unions. It was confirmed that this had been done correctly, following all required procedures and there were no objections from staff or unions.</p> <p>Trustees unanimously approved the change of pay date for support staff.</p>	
	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thursday 23rd May 2019 at Engage Academy Committees at 3.45pm Board of Trustees at 5.00pm 	

Agreed as an accurate record

Signed: Print Name: Date:

Summary of Action Points:

	Who?	When?
• Review Performance Management Policy	Pay Comm	by July 19
• Draft Strategic Plan and reporting cycle – termly up-date	CEO	ongoing
• Consider acting as Vice Chair	All	May 2019
• Suggestions for future topics to be presented by HT	All	ASAP
• Future Agenda Item : tracking a CP/Safeguarding case study.	LA/Clerk	TBA
• KPIs - focus on 1 section peer meeting with a dialogue and context	CEO	May 2019
• CFO 0.6FTE contract to be extended until 31/03/2020	CEO	ASAP
• Check which policy contains procedure for a staff v staff allegation	CEO	ASAP
• Signed copies of meeting minutes prior to February needed	Clerk	ASAP